

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00500 210535Z
ACTION SS-25

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R 210419Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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USMISSION GENEVA
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AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0500

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, EGEN, RH, AS
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA'S VIEWS ON ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND

REF: CANBERRA 9216
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1. THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER SIR DONALD TEBBIT CALLED ON ME TODAY TO DISCUSS HIS MEETING WITH PETER HENDERSON, ACTING SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON THE QUESTION OF THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND. FOLLOWING CABINET DISCUSSIONS ON JANUARY 14 THE GOA VIEW IS THAT:

- THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS IN SYMPATHY WITH THE POLITICAL AIMS BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUND;
- IT WILL BE GLAD TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS FURTHER, BUT AT THIS STAGE IT IS NOT ABLE TO GIVE ANY UNDERTAKING IN PRINCIPLE TO PARTICIPATE;
- SOME FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSALS IS NEEDED;
- THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO THIS BEING ARRANGED EITHER THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS OR AT ANY MULTILATERAL MEETING CALLED FOR THE PURPOSE.

2. TEBBIT TOLD HENDERSON THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED NOT TO RECEIVE AS LEAST AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION. HENDERSON EXPLAINED THAT THE MAIN REASON THE CABINET HAD TAKEN THIS VIEW AT THIS STAGE WAS FOR INTERNAL ECONOMIC REASONS AND RESULTANT INSTRUCTIONS TO MINISTERS FROM THE TREASURER TO MAKE BUDGET CUTS. TEBBIT NOTED THAT THE UK ALSO HAD GREAT FINANCIAL PROBLEMS BUT STRESSED THE COST OF FAILURE TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WOULD HAVE ON ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. TEBBIT ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOA HAD SUGGESTED WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF NATIONS TO BE APPROACHED AS POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS. IT WOULD BE EASIER TO DO THIS IF WE FIRST HAD COMMITMENTS FROM THE SMALLER GROUP INCLUDING AUSTRALIA.

3. HENDERSON NEXT RAISED VARIOUS QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSED FUND PUT BY AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS: COULD WE HAVE A ROUGH IDEA OF THE PROPORTION OF THE FUND WHICH WOULD GO TO THE WHITE AND BLACK MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION. WOULD IT BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCEPTABLE TO THE NATIONALISTS IF A LARGE PART OF THE FUND WENT TO WHITES? MINISTERS ALSO AGAIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA NOTING THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN PAID OR PROMISED TO AUSTRALIAN SETTLERS THERE. TEBBIT REPLIED THAT THE OBJECT OF THE FUND WAS TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ZIMBABWE AS A WHOLE. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO GIVE EVEN A ROUGH PROPORTION BUT TEBBIT ASSUMED THAT IT WOULD LARGELY BENEFIT THE BLACKS. IN ANY EVENT THE FUND WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING THE NATIONALISTS. MINISTERS ASKED HOW WE COULD BE SURE THE BLACK AFRICANS WOULD HONOR THE PURPOSES OF THE FUND AND HOW THE FUND WOULD BE MANAGED AND CONTROLLED. WOULD THERE BE CONTINUAL NEGOTIATIONS ON ITS USE OR WOULD THERE BE CONTROL FROM THE OUTSIDE? WOULD THERE BE A ROLE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL BODY SUCH AS THE WORLD BANK? TEBBIT REPLIED THAT THERE WAS "A HEALTHY MEASURE" OF CONTROL IMPLICIT IN THE FACT THAT THE MONEY WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS AND AGREED TO SEEK INFORMATION ON

MANAGEMENT POSSIBILITIES.

4. MINISTERS WERE ALSO CONCERNED THAT AUSTRALIA'S SHARE OF THE FUND WAS TOO HIGH EXPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE GOA'S TOTAL AID PROGRAM OF \$A 380 MILLION A YEAR. TEBBIT CONTENDED THAT IT WAS NOT RIGHT TO COMPARE AUSTRALIA'S ANNUAL AID EXPENDITURE WITH A FUND INTENDED TO BE EXPENDED OVER FOUR OR FIVE YEARS.

5. TEBBIT THEN FOLLOWED UP ON THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS TAKING PLACE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS OR BY MEANS OF A SPECIAL MISSION. FOR PUBLICITY REASONS, AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT WELCOME A SPECIAL MISSION BUT WOULD PREFER THE DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL OR A MULTILATERAL MEETING.

6. TEBBIT ALSO TOLD ME THAT THE GOA WOULD APPRECIATE
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RECEIVING AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT ON THE PART OF THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION THAT IT SUPPORTS THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND. I TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD SEEK SUCH AN ASSURANCE.

7. TEBBIT'S VIEW IS THAT AUSTRALIA WILL EVENTUALLY AGREE TO CONTRIBUTE IF OTHER COUNTRIES AGREE TO GO ALONG FIRST. THE GOA CLEARLY DOES NOT WANT TO BE OUT FRONT. WE AGREE WITH TEBBIT'S ASSESSMENT THAT THE MOST POSITIVE FEATURE IN AUSTRALIA'S PRESENT POSITION IS ITS WILLINGNESS TO TAKE PART IN A MULTILATERAL MEETING. ONCE THEY ATTEND SUCH A MEETING IT WOULD PROBABLY PROVE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO AVOID A FINAL COMMITMENT EVEN IF IT PROVES SMALLER THAN WE HAD HOPED FOR.
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